

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2254

ANSWERED ON:24.08.2012

DEATH OF INDIANS ABROAD

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Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether instances of death of persons of Indian origin fraudulently sent to work in foreign countries particularly the middle east countries are on the rise in the recent past;

(b) if so, the country-wise details thereof during each of the last three years and the current year along with the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has taken note of/is aware of the extreme working conditions these Indian workers are subjected to in those countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to educate the people in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) and (b): The Indian Missions in Middle East Countries have reported that they are not aware of the death of persons who have been sent to those countries fraudulently. However, the data of Indians who died in these countries is as below.

Country 2009 2010 2011 2012(till July)

Saudi Arabia 1729 1855 1954 437

Kuwait 458 453 459 NA

UAE 1688 1498 1307 435 (upto May)

Oman 543 539 522 248(upto May)

Qatar 262 233 239 NA

Bahrain 1042

Libya 15 27 08 02

Lebanon nil 06 07 01

Syria 08 08 09 08

(c) Complaints regarding non-delayed- payment of salaries, non-renewal of visa, and unsatisfactory living conditions; and refusal of medical treatment, leave or air ticket on completion of 2 years period of contract from Indian emigrants are received from time to time.

(d) Whenever a complaint is received, action is initiated by the Ministry by asking the concerned Indian Mission to look into the matter. If need be, steps are taken for the suspension or cancellation of the Registration Certificate of the Recruiting Agent. If required, requisite legal action is also initiated against the concerned Recruiting Agent. Complaints filed against illegal agents are referred to the State Governments. When there is a complaint against a foreign employer, proceedings for blacklisting such an employer are initiated. Indian Missions also take up these issues with the foreign employers/local governments to protect the welfare of the workers.

The Government has taken several initiatives to protect the welfare of Overseas Indian Workers which inter alia include:

(i) A Nation - wide Awareness-cum-Publicity Campaign through media is carried out to educate intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, risk of illegal migration and precautions to be taken during emigration.

(ii) The Ministry has notified the Emigration (Amendment) Rules 2009 on 9th July, 2009 revising the eligibility criteria of Recruiting Agents (RAs) and increasing the security amount and service charges.

(iii) The Ministry has set up the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in all the Indian Missions for providing onsite support and financial assistance to Indian workers in distress.

(iv) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24 hour telephone helpline in eight languages to provide authentic information to intending emigrants as well as emigrants on all aspects of emigration.

(v) Indian Workers' Resource Centre (IWRC) is also functioning at Dubai for taking care of the emergency needs of Indian workers.

(vi) India had signed Labour Agreements with Jordan and Qatar in the 1980s to protect the interests of the Indian Workers. Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed with United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December, 2006, with Kuwait in April, 2007, with Oman in November 2008, with Malaysia in January 2009, and with Bahrain in June 2009.

An Additional Protocol to the existing Labour Agreement between India and Qatar was signed in November, 2007.

These MOUs enhance bilateral co-operation in the management of migration and protection of labour welfare. Under these MOUs Joint Working Groups (JWG) have been constituted that meet regularly in order to resolve bilateral labour issues.

(vii) In addition, the Government has taken the following measures for protecting the safety and welfare of women workers of the ECR (Emigration Check Required) category to emigrate to 17 ECR notified countries: -

(1) Minimum Age limit of 30 years has been made mandatory in respect of all intending women emigrants.

(2) The employment contract must be duly attested by the Indian Missions in respect of all such women.

(3) Women household workers are allowed to emigrate after the Indian mission has attested the identity of the foreign employer and terms and conditions of the contract.

(4) A pre-paid mobile facility must be provided by the employer to every woman Household Worker.

(5) The Foreign Employer recruiting a woman household worker is required to deposit a security amount of \$2500 with the Indian Mission.